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Written Testimony of Christopher Phelps, Program Director  
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Energy and Technology Committee

Thursday, March 4, 2010

Written testimony **supporting** House Bill 5364, An Act Concerning Virtual Net Metering

Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony supporting Raised House Bill 5364. Environment Connecticut is a member-supported non-profit environmental advocacy organization.

Environment Connecticut supports this legislation for its ability to expand the number of families and businesses able to take advantage of the benefits of Class I Renewable Energy Systems. Additionally, this legislation would help make certain technologies more readily marketable in Connecticut.

Virtual net metering allows a grouping of customers to jointly “share” the benefits of renewable energy generation systems. For instance, a municipality might install a fuel-cell or large solar system on under-utilized land such as a landfill, and homeowners, businesses and municipal facilities in that municipality can receive credit on their bills for a portion of the renewable energy produced by that system.

Such a mechanism provides an opportunity for customers whose facility is otherwise unsuitable for siting of a Class I system to reap the benefits of such a system. For example, this could enable homeowners to more readily benefit from fuel cells or a business with insufficient available roof space to benefit from solar power installations.

We respectfully suggest these changes to the bill:

In lines 4-8, expand the scope of customer classes that could benefit from virtual net metering to include more than just affordable housing and municipalities. Examples include residents of a single neighborhood, churches, as well as commercial facilities within the same geographic area.

Clarify that Class I resources for net metering can be installed on sites without any load.  
(Such as a vacant brownfield or municipal parking lot.)

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 5364. We urge you to support this legislation which has the potential to greatly increase the amount of clean, Class I renewable energy generation installed in Connecticut. This would grow Connecticut's clean energy economy, create new jobs, and cut emissions of pollutants including global warming pollution.

Sincerely,

Christopher Phelps  
Program Director  
Environment Connecticut